

"The Original Online ST Magazine"

Vol III No.104

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> Issue: #104 STReportâ € The Online Magazine of Choice!

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-----*** OFFICIAL ATARI BULLETIN RE: TOS 1.4 RELEASE! ***-----
 ---*** AUGIE LIGOURI NOW V.P. & GEN. MGR.! ***-----

AVAILABLE ON: COMP-U-SERVE ~ DELPHI ~ GENIE ~ BIX

> The Editor's Podiumâ ¢

"The Mega ST is the Flagship computer of the ST lineup and is fully upgradable via the internal connector. The Flagship line of STs will only be sold by those dealers who are considered to be VARs and serious minded about their future and that of the ST market". The preceding statements have been vocalized countless times over the past few years. Both of these declarations are now nothing more than flatulent effervescence.

This summer placed a heavy burden on the majority of those business' whose major focus is on Atari computer products. From all corners of the country we are receiving reports that the smaller dealers are "dropping

like flies". The slump in sales for Atari related computer products has been a horror story so far. It appears that Atari's attitude has not been conducive to helping the dealers. Someone in Bunglesvale had better wake up to smell of the coffee, Atari must court the market for dealers and bend over backwards to keep those they now have. Too many dealers have already gone through the portal of pain and passed on the story of Atari's less than adequate dealer support.

Atari has announced the new line-up of machines, the next generation of Sts. Of note, they have not formally announced whether or not the NEW GENERATION of machines will be UPGRADABLE. How sad, if we "assumed" by all the posturing and claims of lesser individuals that these machines were going to be fully upgradable. At this point in time, upgradability of the new machines, to any degree, is very unclear. Ask yourself, am I going to be facing the same dilemma as those who now own the 2500.00 Flagship Mega4?

Atari is indirectly promoting it's new products in the US, and so far, the wheels of high power ads and merchandising have yet to begin rolling, we shall seewe shall see. STReport has believed that this is Atari's year and we have openly said so. And will continue to do so until Atari shows us other wise.

Also contained in this issue is the "Special Bulletin" from Atari concerning TOS 1.4 and it's release. It looks like they are finally ready to get this TOS to the users! If one were to look back for a moment, STReport was first to say that TOS 1.4 was a serious improvement over the previous Operating Systems. We termed it a "quantum leap forward" over 6 weeks ago. We strongly advise all the users, power or otherwise, to obtain and use TOS 1.4. It is superb.

Thanks again for your support!

Ralph.....

"ATARI IS BACK!"

:HOW TO GET YOUR OWN GENIE ACCOUNT:

To sign up for GENie service: Call: (with modem) 800-638-8369.

Upon connection type HHH (RETURN after that).

Wait for the U#= prompt.

Type XJM11877,GENie and hit RETURN.

The system will prompt you for your information.

THE GENIE ATARI ST ROUNDTABLE - AN OVERVIEW

The Roundtable is an area of GENie specifically set aside for owners and

users of Atari ST computers, although all are welcome to participate.

There are three main sections to the Roundtable: the Bulletin Board, the Software Library and the Real Time Conference area.

The Bulletin Board contains messages from Roundtable members on a variety of Topics, organized under several Categories. These messages are all Open and available for all to read (GENie Mail should be used for private messages).

If you have a question, comment, hot rumor or an answer to someone else's question, the Bulletin Board is the place to share it.

The Software Library is where we keep the Public Domain software files that are available to all Roundtable members. You can 'download' any of these files to your own computer system by using a Terminal Program which uses the 'XMODEM' file-transfer method. You can also share your favorite Public Domain programs and files with other Roundtable members by 'uploading' them to the Software Library. Uploading on GENie is FREE, so you are encouraged to participate and help your Roundtable grow.

The Real Time Conference is an area where two or more Roundtable members may get together and 'talk' in 'real-time'. You can participate in organized conferences with special guests, drop in on our weekly Open Conference, or simply join in on an impromptu chat session. Unlike posting messages or Mail for other members to read at some later time, everyone in the Conference area can see what you type immediately, and can respond to you right away, in an 'electronic conversation'.

> CPU REPORTâ €
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To All Atari Owners:

Rainbow TOS
The Operating System Upgrade from Atari

Atari is proud to introduce Rainbow TOS, a new version of the ST/MEGA operating system. During the early stages of the development of Rainbow TOS, we actively gathered suggestions from our customers and incorporated many of these suggestions.

We have made many enhancements, including an easier to use GEM Desktop. Here are a few of the changes:

- Faster disk access.
- IBM compatible disk format from Desktop.
- Compatible with high resolution monitors.
- Automatically run GEM applications on boot-up!
- Soft-Reset available from keyboard.

- Revised File Selector.
- GEM Desktop supports "moving" of files.
- Folder renaming ability!
- Better memory management.
- Archive bit handling for Hard Drive backup.

And many more! We consider Rainbow TOS to be a major enhancement to ST and MEGA computers and recommend that every one of our customers upgrade. Rainbow TOS is available now through your local Atari dealer.

For additional information on Rainbow TOS
please call our Technical Support Department at (408) 745-2004.

Rainbow TOS is available from, and only installable by,
your local Atari Dealer!

Suggested Retail Price \$99.95 (parts only)

Call (408) 745-2367 to locate an Atari Dealer near you.

Augie Liguori
V.P. and General Manager
Atari Corporation

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Just a few pointers in regards to the current situation:

1.
It appears (from my experiences on the Tech Support lines the last few days..) that some dealers haven't checked into the Dealer Support Bulletin Board System for new information on Rainbow TOS general release. So, if your dealer doesn't know about the release, please ask him to call the Bulletin Board for ordering information. He should have the number. If not, give him my number! John Townsend, Atari Corp. (408) 745-2004.
2.
If you don't have a dealer in your area, please call Atari's Customer Relations. Have your Phone Area code or Zip Code ready. They will direct you to the closest dealer who can handle your situation. Before I get the on-slaught of questions, the dealer they will refer you to will be able to assist you regardless of how FAR away you are located.
3.
If anyone has ANY questions at all, please ask. I want this to go as smoothly as possible. However, please call Customer Relations for Dealer information. Experience has shown that we can save ALOT of time on both sides if you contact Customer Relations direct.
4.
Thank you for your patience with Atari regarding this release. We sincerely hope that you will enjoy the upgrade. I believe it is well worth the money and makes the ST a much better computer.

For those that aren't sure if they wish to upgrade, please ask ANY questions you wish. I will be happy to answer them. As for someone's suggestion about a list of changes, I am attempting to get permission to post such a list. I will keep everyone posted on my progress.

Well, that about covers it. Any questions? Ask away!

-- John Townsend
Atari Corporation

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PSSSST! ---> RAINBOW TOS = TOS 1.4.

> ST WORLD & ATARIFESTS STR FOCUSâ €
=====

What... is going on here?

LEAVE THE USERGROUPS ALONE!
=====

RE: Usergroups really DO KNOW what they doing!!!

Jealousy and envy. Ego and alter ego. All this sounds very impressive, well, it ain't! What we have is skullduggery at it's foulest best. How is it possible that a staunch and avid supporter of WOA can turncoat and backshoot repeatedly with such viciousness as to make the intent to destroy Richard Tsukiji, WOA and ST World more than obvious? What causes these surprising events? Could it be that the shooter(s) were not treated fairly? Is it possible the shooter(s) are trying to build a crusader type reputation at the expense of Tsukiji, WOA and Atari? After all, WOA has Atari's enthusiastic support and encouragement.

Consider this, when ST World was on the crest of the wave, it's most vengeful critic now, was, at that time, it's loudest Apostle. With the

advent of certain events in California, ie; the cancellation of the San Jose WOA show, the cancellation of the Glendale show and the "alleged" change of heart about supporting shows by Atari. The "worm has quickly turned"!

At this time, it becomes somewhat easier to see the story unfold as it should be seen. A constant succession of mistakes, circumstances and very poor communications between all parties concerned pushed the inevitable along. It soon becomes increasingly more difficult to envision any malicious intent perpetrated by any of the participants. Additionally, these magnanimous rumors that allude to Atari dropping support for the WOA shows and usergroup shows is not true.

Of MAJOR concern for everyone is the nifty manner in which the suggestion is "slipped in" that the Usergroups go from one "magazine" and promoter to another magazine and gracious benefactor! Usergroups staged successful shows long before the arrival of the "Greeks Bearing Gifts". And will continue to schedule and stage very successful shows in the future.

The bottom line here is a clear message; Leave the Usergroups alone, they are doing ok setting up and running the shows among themselves. Atari can and will support the shows with little or no problem, we said support not redo. Why try to fix what is not broken. The major problems have stemmed from all the opportunistic meddling.

The Tarpinians, Barnes, Rayles, Tsukiji's and whomever else may endeavor to put on an Atarifest show need no "crutches" ..especially rubber ones! We see the entire rehash of the Glendale situation as a very sad and exploitive effort that should be put to bed. Some where along the line, someone lost grasp of what the shows are all about. The main purpose of a show is to promote the Atari product line and it's supportive third party developers. Competition between shows is absurd. Setting dates, on top of one another is short sighted and does infinitely more harm than good.

The main point to realize is; The shows must be aimed at geographical regions instead of each show trying to pull participants and attendees from all over the universe. The co-ordination of Atarifest show dates, in which Atari is expected to participate, should be managed through the good offices of Bob Brodie, Usergroup Coordinator, Atari Corp. In so doing, the userbase is assured of no further date clashes or ego trips.

Furthermore, for any future shows (Atarifests) to be successful or to carry any credibility, Atari MUST increase the US userbase. Also Atari must get their act together and start the National Advertising campaign. Above all else, get the new products to market * before * Christmas.

IS YOUR COMPUTER INSURED?
=====

by Neil Bradley

When I made the big purchase of my MEGA II and a 2nd hard drive, I decided to call my home owners insurance company. I made some inquiries as to the coverage available to me for my computer equipment. The agent had to get back to me, as the information was not available in the office. When the agent called back, the coverage available to my computer system was subject to depreciation and limited to: "Theft and natural disaster". When I inquired if power spikes/surges (my local electric company is noted for their spikes/surges in this area) the answer was a definite "NOT covered". The agent suggested that if there was a claim, I might try to go after the electric company - but she didn't think I would get very far. She also commented that the computer equipment applied toward the total amount covered for personal property which could limit the claim for other property I have in the house.

After getting that unwelcome news, I called a few other agents in the area. I got the same answer from everyone I talked to. The equipment (not software) was covered for fire/theft/natural disaster, but subject to depreciation.

I remembered reading something a long time ago in an old Atari 8-bit box concerning some company that specialized in computer insurance. I called the 800 directory assistance and the operator was very accommodating, spent about 5 minutes with me before finding the listing for "Safeware".

I then called the Safeware number and got the following information:

- All your computer equipment/software is covered.
- Loss could be for ANY reason - including accidental damage by myself (i.e. I drop the monitor on the floor and break it).
- You have REPLACEMENT coverage - up to the limit of the policy you purchase. I.e. I would get sufficient money to purchase a new MEGA II computer if the one I have now was stolen.
- The coverage is blanket - they do NOT require serial numbers. What you have to do is provide proof of purchase: Sales receipts, warranty registration, etc. This part is an absolute. No proof of purchase, no money. This proof of purchase includes software as well.
- Items not covered: Rented equipment, equipment you have for the purpose of selling it for someone else.
- There is a \$50.00 deductible per claim.

According to the flyer I have here, the costs of the insurance and limits are as follows:

\$ COVERED	ANNUAL PREMIUM
-----	-----
0 - 2,000	\$39.00
2,000 - 5,000	69.00
5,000 - 8,000	89.00

8,001 - 11,000	109.00
11,001 - 14,000	129.00

SAFWARE - THE INSURANCE AGENCY, INC
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P.O. BOX 02211
COLUMBUS, OH 43202

1-800-848-3469 1-614-262-0559

> MISSION DISK STReport InfoFileâ ¢ S-H Latest entry into the ST Arena.
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FALCON MISSION DISK
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FOR AMIGA & ATARI ST

Spectrum Holobyte ships OPERATION: COUNTERSTRIKE
To enhance award-winning FALCON F-16 fighter simulation

Alameda, California, AUGust 25,1989 - Spectrum Holobyte today announced the shipment of the FALCON MISSION DISK, OPERATION: COUNTERSTRIKE, for Commodore Amiga and Atari ST computers. The program works with the company's award-winning F-16 fighter simulation, FALCON, to expand it to a full campaign with all the extras.

Twelve all new missions, set in a new landscape, comprise the campaign and bring to FALCON a whole new level of strategy and non-stop action. The missions are designed for successive play with the overall objective of flying the FALCON fighter into enemy territory and destroying the enemy's offensive potential.

A deadlier enemy now confronts the pilot. Enemy forces include four types of moving vehicles--tanks, trains, amphibious landing craft, and trucks as well as the ever-menacing MiGs. More advanced MiG-29s have replaced the MiG-21s.

While defending the airbase and his plane against assault from ground forces and the threatening MiGs, the fighter pilot is asked to fly missions to destroy the enemy's stationary targets--SAM sites, a power station, an oil refinery, a factory and bridges. Vigilance and speed are required. If a pilot takes too much time, for example, in his mission to stop a truck convoy, the home airbase may be captured by enemy tanks and the campaign is lost.

Just as in the original FALCON, every enemy target destroyed contributes toward success, but points are awarded for destroying specific targets depending on which mission has been selected. Five levels of difficulty, designated by rank from 1st Lieutenant through Colonel, are the same as in

the original FALCON. Also retained is the awards system. Pilots who earn enough points (merits) may be decorated with one of five medals from the Purple Heart to the Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor is achieved only by causing total enemy industrial shutdown while flying at a Major rank or higher (top three levels).

Another outstanding feature of FALCON also available in OPERATION: COUNTERSTRIKE is the ability to go head-to-head in dogfights against an opponent on a second computer. Using either direct connect or a 1200 baud or faster modem, players can link ST to ST, Amiga to Amiga, ST to Amiga, or either ST or Amiga to an Apple Macintosh.

The original FALCON has won numerous awards, including three awards from the Software Publishers Association--Best Simulation, Best Action/Strategy Game, and Best Technical Achievement. Amiga and Atari versions were released in December last year and have since been on most best-selling software lists.

The OPERATION: COUNTERSTRIKE programs for the Atari ST and the Commodore Amiga are available through regular retail channels. Each version has a suggested retail price of \$24.95. An original Falcon is required to run the new programs. 512K RAM is needed for basic features and one megabyte RAM for additional features.

Spectrum Holobyte, a division of Sphere, Inc., Alameda, California, is a leading publisher of entertainment software. The company specializes in developing and marketing simulations for all types of personal computers.

For more information:

Contact....Rita Harrington at:

Spectrum Holobyte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA. 94501
1-415-522-3584

> UPGRADE ROUTE STR Spotlightâ € Upgrade or enhancement, a war of words!
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IS THE MEGA AT A DEAD END?
=====

by R. F. Mariano

According to some "informed" sources, the Mega expansion slot is

definitely usable. We respectfully ask ..AS WHAT? And with what? It is stated; "I have a number of things connected to my expansion slot and have done so for some time now". It is wonderful that he has found a use for this slot ...the average user hasn't. Now, with advent of the 'new' STE and TT the mega appears to be a hot candidate for the 'also ran' department. Folks, is all this noise about the STE really a valid step up from the ST line? In all honesty, it appears to be a lateral step rather than a forward and upward step.

The same source stated that at least Atari is "taking steps in the right direction by making the current crop of machines _upgradable_", as he puts it. Does this mean that they (Atari) are finally admitting that the machines prior to the STE and TT were not intended to be upgraded? What is the message here? Are we to fall in step like so many sheep and sell our present machines? And immediately buy the new "upgradable" variety? It becomes impossible see where, as stated in the past, a user can buy a mega4 within the last 6 months and since the upgrade path is not there, have to sell his mega4 to buy one of the new upgradables and not take a severe loss! It appears Atari is forgetting the loyal USA users who stood by while Atari and it's "executives" danced with the European Fat Lady for three years!

Accordingly, we present this letter:

Item	2642596	89/09/05	23:10
From:	PAUL.LANTZ	Paul Lantz	
To:	ST.REPORT	Ralph F. Mariano	
Sub:	Atari Pricing		

A popular Atari slogan has been "Power without the price". Presumably this means that you can get a better buy, more power per dollar, if you buy Atari. I understand the slogan has been retired and I think it was about time, unfortunately.

Today, I do not believe that the Atari ST line offers good value for money when compared with other computing options. My figures are based on Toronto prices but I am sure that similar comparisons could be made in other centres and currencies. Four years ago, I bought my first ST, a 520. It was priced the same as a Commodore 128. I had been thinking about getting a 128 and have always been grateful to the salesman who suggested I look at the ST instead.

At the time, IBM type systems were far out of my price range. The ST had 512K and good graphics. It certainly was much more powerful, and less expensive, than the clones around in 1985. Since then, I have moved from that 520 to a 1040 and finally to a Mega 4. I have spent thousands on software, a hard disk, printers and modems. I use my Atari at home every day and we use a couple more of them at work. They are great machines. I picked up an Atari laser a couple of weeks ago, fantastic machine. I am a fan. I have a son who is going into his second year at university. Last year, I toyed with the idea of getting him a computer, probably a 1040. I bought him a typewriter instead. This year, he came to me and suggested that he wanted to buy a 1040 himself. It sounded like a good deal, I said I would likely get him a hard disk and a printer to go with it along with some software.

Since that conversation, I have done a little computer shopping. I am not at all convinced that buying a 1040 is such a great deal anymore. In Toronto today, a 520 with an internal 720K drive and a one meg upgrade

goes for \$699 (Canadian, adjust for your own currency). To put together a complete system we are looking at close to \$1700 including \$799 for a 30 meg hard disk and \$200 for a monitor. What about a clone? Well, I know that an ST is more powerful than a low end clone. What about an AT clone? Lots of prices around but I noticed a few that impressed me. How about \$995 for a basic system that runs at 10 MHz. Assume the monitor costs about the same as the ST monitor and you are looking at \$1200. One big difference, the AT clone comes with a built in 40 meg hard disk with a 28 millisecond average access time. The Atari hard drive, according to the dealer, has a 65 millisecond average access time. The AT system includes a clock (add \$40 or \$50 to the 1040 if you want one) and a rather nice keyboard that feels like a typewriter keyboard. Nastiest thing about the Atari is the hard disk, turn it on, listen for it to get to speed, then turn on the computer. On a PC system, just turn on one switch.

I don't know what we will buy, if anything. I am rather sentimental about the ST and my son is familiar with the machine. If we buy Atari it will not be because of price. To me it is rather sad. A company that started out offering fantastic value for money now is overpriced and underpowered. I have read about the STE and am not impressed. The TT sounds nice and so does the ATW but they are both out of my price range for the time being. If I wanted to buy a new machine today I would be very drawn to the many 386 based systems that are rapidly falling in price. I am not sure that everyone in the Atari realizes what has happened to pricing.

I read an article in one of the hard copy magazines a couple of months ago in which the author pointed out the advantage of buying a \$1300 ST system instead of a \$2500 basic IBM system. I felt like screaming "Get Real". For \$2500 Canadian I can buy a AT system with a lot of bells and whistles that will outrun and outdisplay my ST. I understand why the ST is so expensive: few are sold, they cost more per unit to produce than clones. That's Atari's problem, not mine and I wish them luck.

Paul Lantz
Moosonee, Ontario

> Michtron Reports STReport InfoFileâ € What they are saying "Over There"
=====

ctsy Michtron RT

ATARI CLOSES THE GENERATION GAP
=====

Last week, in Dusseldorf, Atari Computer GmbH unveiled two "next generation" additions to the ST range: The enhanced STE and the Motorola 68030-based TT.

In this case, "unveiled" does not adequately describe the 90-minute extravaganza laid on for over 500 German computer dealers and European distributors. After a cabaret with magician, a singing group, a human "robot", a laser light show and indoor fireworks, a huge white screen burst into flame, burning away to reveal the two new systems on the stage. It cleared "over the top" by a considerable margin.

The two new models address the main problem with the ST: except for increases in memory, it has not enjoyed a major upgrade since the first 512k model appeared in 1985. During this time, other systems have advanced, while DOS-compatible micros have also tumbled in price. The ST used to have a big price/performance advantage and now it doesn't.

The TT and STE could also be seen as a response to the Amiga A500 and 2000 micros, with which Commodore has had some success in the last year.

The TT is the most interesting new machine. It uses the Motorola 68030 processor, popular in Sun workstations and the Apple Iix. This makes the TT potentially more powerful than perhaps 95 percent of the micros currently on users' desks. (The Mac II only has a 68020.) At the German price—which converts to \$3000, including 30 megabyte hard disc and colour monitor—it should be competitive, though not really a mass-market machine.

The TT030/2 is the base-level TT with a 16MHz 68030, Atari "blitter" and two megabytes of memory. The operating system is TOS 030 on 512K of ROM, an extended version of the current 192K system. It includes GEM, digital Research's mouse-driven, windowing Graphics Environment Manager.

The TT has enhanced monochrome and colour graphics, plus stereo sound. Monochrome graphics resolution jumps from today's 640 by 400 to 1,280 by 960 pixels. A new colour mode offers 640 by 480 pixels (IBM VGA level) with 16 colours from a palette of 4,096, or 320 by 480 with 256 colours.

Another possible enhancement was not announced, but hinted at by the provision of an unexpected socket next to the TT's Midi ports. This looks exactly like an AppleTalk network connector. Atari's technical director Leonard Tramiel would only say Atari was looking at a number of options.

All round, then the TT is an advanced addition to the Mega ST range, and (as no enhanced Megas have been announced: an eventual replacement for them. It is not obviously the expected ultra-cheap Unix box though, as with the Apple Macintosh II, Unix is an option.

Unisoft (formerly Root, in the UK) has already ported Unix System V to the TT, but this was not shown at the launch. Atari has promised X Windows and the X Desktop interface from Ixi in Cambridge, which has also been adopted by Santa Cruz for the Open Desktop system for Intel 80386 based micros. Insignia Solutions software emulator will be provided to run DOS programs.

However, the provision of only one half-length VME expansion slot suggests the main Unix market for the TT will be as an Ethernet terminal.

The TT could be turned into a small multi-user Unix system, but this seems less likely. It would require a substantial investment in porting applications software to the machine, and Atari doesn't have the staff or experience to support such an approach. But the TT could be a useful OEM

product which Unix specialists could rebadge and resell, relieving Atari of the need to invest in software or support customers directly.

Whatever else it may be, the TT is clearly a cheap business machine which will be judged against Apple's Macintosh, the Amiga 2000 and standard DOS compatibles. The STE, by contrast, is aimed squarely at the serious home user and the games enthusiast.

The STE is simply an extended version of the one megabyte 1040ST with its 8MHz 16/32-bit Motorola 68000. It looks the same, except for the tiny E which has been inserted next to the T's crossbar.

The main enhancements are new colour and sound facilities in 256K of ROM. You can now select 512 colours from a palette of 4,096 and there is "stereo sound in CD quality" from an 8 bit PCM generator. Two female joystick ports have been added to support four games players as standard, or six with an extension cable.

Also, there is now hardware support for horizontal and vertical scrolling and for a video "genlock" interface. All these improve the STE as a games machine, and give it a similar specification to the Amiga A500. This can't be accidental.

The problem is, of course, that about 1.5 million of the old style STs have been sold, and no STEs. You can add enhancements to a machine, but getting software houses to use them is another matter. Games will have to run on STs to sell, so STE buyers are unlikely to get many enhanced versions of commercial games for some while. No doubt some feedback will eventually come back from the few of UK software houses that have received STEs for development purposes.

At the moment, the 1040ST is a relatively slow seller in the price driven UK market. The 1040STE could replace it relatively quickly, perhaps before Christmas. An enhanced version of the more popular 520 must also be anticipated. Given the similarity of the machines, a 520STE might ship any time. But showing and shipping are not the same. We have yet to see the 1040STE and TT30/2 in the UK, and I would not expect significant quantities of the TT to arrive before February 1990. The German market is very important to Atari--it's probably bigger than France and the UK combined--and the early supplies will clearly go there.

Anyway, Atari is currently busy shipping as many of its Portfolio "palmtop" PCs as it can make, has just put the Stacy portable ST into production, and is trying to get software for the Epyx-designed Lynx hand-held colour games machine into development.

But... it will be a shame if the TT is delayed. It's the only reasonably affordable 68030-based colour machine there is.

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- Sunnyvale, CA. ***** ATARI SUPPORT FOR ALL ATARIFESTS ROCK SOLID! *****

Despite the stories by grandstanding reports, Atari Corp. has not suspended, nor will it diminish it's support for the show circuit, in a recent conversation with a highly placed Executive, it was made quite clear that the story (rumor) about Atari dropping support for the 'Fests was false and that Atari's support for ALL shows would continue as before.

- Sunnyvale, CA. ***** ENTIRE SALES FORCE IS GONE! *****

Although we have grave reservations, concerning Atari's immediate future at this time, because of the dismissal of the entire sales force we must look even harder to Atari in wanting them to renew our confidence in it's plans and future. Not to mention that the "new" Ad agency is also history. Atari is now putting all it's eggs in an outside company's sales team. Hopefully, this is the key, after all, don't most of the highly successful companies across this vast country all use mftr's reps? We must remember however, this method is expensive and the cost is usually past on to the customer. Here it is September, and STILL nothing. ...but talk. Many of the more experienced industry observers feel the STE may never be the contender it was intended to be in this marketplace because of it having too little, too late.

- Boston, MA. **** INDEPENDENT SURVEY SEZ PORTFOLIO AIN'T! ****

According to a US software publisher, who is polling his dealers and distributors in Europe, the fabled Portfolio is not yet on the shelves at dealers in Europe. Meanwhile, we are told they are selling by the thousands. That could be true, but are they shipping? Time will tell.

- New York City, N.Y. **** PARK AVENUE VIDEO HISTORY? ****

Park Ave Video, at one time a very strong Atari dealer, is rumored to have dropped the line.. This dealer, who participated in various ad campaigns in the NY tabloids said the price cutting by it's local competition and a gross lack of cooperation by the company prompted the move. In other related cases, many of Atari's dealers are highly skeptical of the new products making it to the shelves in time for this Christmas Season. A number of the dealers have stated that if Atari doesn't perform by year's end, they too, will drop them. At this point we add, that after having heard a large number of opinions from both dealers and users, the majority are very leery of the STE and most are ready to bet it NEVER makes it to the US market. However, all were in agreement, the TT, Portfolio and Stacy will be Atari's strong suite, but they must get them on the market for this Christmas. Again, time will tell...

- Kettering, OH.

***** IS TOS 1.4 REALLY SHIPPING? *****

Atari's leadership must get in touch with the everyday goings on in the business. For example, one major dealer made it quite clear that he felt Sam had "absolutely NO idea about what was going on in the rest of the company concerning TOS 1.4!" This gent was quite peeved. He exclaimed; "Don't believe that stuff about TOS 1.4 clearly shipping to all the dealers! He went on to say; "As usual, Atari tells only the good side to the "It's shipping" story." It seems that if a dealer tries to order a large quantity of TOS 1.4 chip sets he is told he can only order an equivalent amount to the number of MEGA-DTP-MONITERM systems HE HAS IN STOCK!!! One thing is for sure, Atari's expert handling of the release of TOS 1.4 is doing nothing but encouraging the sale of Eproms and Eprom burners.

- Sunnyvale, CA.

***** AUGIE LIGOURI NEW VP AND GM! *****

Amidst the latest revolving door epitaphs, the most recent occurrence at our favorite computer company is rumored to be the appointment of Augie Ligouri as Atari's new V.P. and General Manager. Lotsa luck Augie, if anyone can do the job we know it's you. His appointment couldn't come at a better time, 'now, we all shall see who the real movers and shakers are in Sunnyvale'. Granted, Atari is enjoying a phenomenal response to the announced Portfolio, but if it doesn't get on the market soon, the only sales prospects left will be loyal Atari folks.

- San Francisco, CA.

***** PAYBACKS ARE A BITTER PILL! *****

A rather testy rumor is flitting about and it goes like this, "The folks who made certain chips for earlier game machines (2600-7800) are inflating the costs of chips now for the new Lynx in a get even move from unhappy dealings in the past". This is alleged to be one of the causes of the delayed arrival of the new Lynx. Also, the LCD screen for the Stacy (being made by Citizen) is another horror story rumor that goes back about 4-6 years when Citizen was very unhappy with CBM.

> TT POTENTIALS STReport InfoFile Alan Pratt reveals more TT secrets..

=====

ctsy F-NET

Article 19028 of 19030, Wed 21:19.

Subject: Re: Duesseldorf: personal impression of the TT(T)

From: apratt@atari.UUCP (Allan Pratt @ Atari Corp., Sunnyvale CA)

Hmmm, the whole graphics capability question is really foggy so far. Here's some really straight scoop about the TT from inside Atari: The video palette has *4* bits per gun for color values. That is, you have a total of 4096 colors: 16 levels each of red, green, and blue. (The ST has a palette of 512 colors: 8 levels for each gun.) Another "color" mode provides 256 levels of grey (actually green), for really fine reproduction of a black-and-white image. This is independent of the resolution: if you're in a 16-color mode, you can pick any 16 levels from the spectrum of 256. (We call this hyper-monochrome: one color, but a lot of it!)

There are *6* video modes: the three ST modes (totally compatible), plus 640x480 16-color, plus 320x480 *256* color, plus 1280x960 monochrome. ALL of these modes except the last can be shown on a single monitor. That monitor need not be multisync. It can be a slightly modified VGA monitor, or (of course) the monitor which Atari will sell for the TT. The last mode needs a Viking monitor or something similar. ST high rez (640 x 400 x 2 colors) is not limited to black and white: you can choose any two colors.

Does this mean it has a "DMA" port like the 520/1040/MegaX? Does it have a "real" SCSI port as well? What kind of throughput can be expected from the hard disk interfaces? Can it do DMA and access 4Meg?

Yes, there is a DMA port like on the ST and Mega. Your hard disk will plug right in. You can connect a bootable SH204 and it will boot! There is also an external SCSI port. The SCSI port can access the full 32-bit address space; the ACSI port is limited to 24-bit addresses. The internal hard drive is connected to the SCSI bus.

Is the VME slot the only way to expand it, or does it have a Mega compatible expansion connector as well?

(There are a number of ways to expand the TT: you can add 2MB of dual-purpose (video and CPU) RAM, or 10MB when 4Mbit chips are available. You can add 4MB of REALLY FAST 32-bit nybble-mode RAM (not video-capable), and there's the VME bus.

The number 2MHz that's been bandied about needs some explanation:

The CPU and memory clock speed is 16MHz. There are four clocks in a bus cycle. For dual-purpose RAM, around half the bus cycles go to the video or refresh. Therefore, the CPU gets around two million MEMORY ACCESSES per second, or 2MHz. There are other architectural details which make it a little faster than that. And remember, each access gets you 32 bits, not 16 as on the ST. Also, since the CPU is allocated half the bus cycles, it isn't ALWAYS postponed by video or refresh: it might try to access the bus just as its turn comes up, and not wait at all. Therefore dual-purpose memory accesses run at MORE THAN 2MHz.

"Fast" RAM does not have video taking up any of the cycles, so you don't have to wait for that. It takes 4 or 5 clocks (I think) to set up a fast-RAM access, but "nybble mode" means that the CPU fills its cache in

"burst mode" at one cycle per subsequent access. The VME logic introduces one wait state, so a VMEbus access takes 5 clocks. (Your mileage may vary: VME cards vary widely in response time.) But, again, you won't be held off the bus by video. VME in the TT shown in Germany is A24/D16 (24 bits of address, 16 bits of data).

[programs can load in fast RAM or dual-purpose RAM]

By a "loader option" the original poster means "load program off disk" not "load .o files into a .prg file." This is correct: there are flags in the PRG header which control the behavior of Pexec and Malloc. Most program can run in fast RAM -- programs which change the screen base pointer and some other things can't, though.

[RAM on the VME bus]

You *can* put memory on the VME bus. The performance penalty is not bad. TOS will recognize that memory and use it for programs if you set it up right.

Does it have a Blitter?

No need for one. The reason for the Blitter is to remove instruction-fetch overhead from memory operations, and with the 68030 on-chip cache, the TT does just fine without it.

It is the cheapest workstation of that power around (about 1/2 the price of comparable competitors here in Germany).

You can say that again. Please, people, remember that when you compare the TT with a Next machine, for instance, you're talking about roughly 4x the price! JT's motto is Power Without the Price, and we think we're giving you just that.

Opinions expressed above do not necessarily reflect those of Atari Corp. or anyone else. -- Allan Pratt, Atari Corp. ...ames!atari!apratt

> A GOOD SCORE? TOS 1.4 STReport OnLineâ € And certain dealers wonder why?
=====

RE: Why dealers say ..."DROP THE LINE!"

EXCERPT FROM AN ONLINE POST

Well, I just called Computers Etc. in CT, (203) 336-3100 and they told me that they have TOS 1.4 in stock. But they're selling it at a hefty price : \$120 for the roms and an additional \$50.- for the installation. At 170 dollars to upgrade my 1040, I'm seriously thinking of selling it and getting a Mega 2 with TOS 1.4, I'll have the blitter, detachable keyboard

plus a new computer with warranty for just a few hundred dollars more (not to forget the extra 1meg memory, ooppss...).

QUESTION:

Will Atari allow this to continue... It is now quite apparent that the prices for TOS 1.4 chips and the installation thereof must be carefully kept within reason. Besides, there is no guarantee the new Mega will have TOS 1.4 installed.

Folks, please think about what this dealer is really trying to do, certainly it is not to ripoff customers. We respectfully submit that the dealer was doing * exactly * what was requested of him by Atari. Keep the TOS 1.4 in stock for the customers who buy a moniterm monitor by pricing them unreasonably high.

Understandably, the young man who priced the chips and their installation is not interested in anything but the chips and their total cost. We must, however, consider the events that lead up to this situation.

- A- Atari required that the dealers only sell TOS 1.4 chip sets to those customers who bought a Moniterm Monitor.
- B- Atari required from the dealers proof of purchase and verified same with the Moniterm people.
- C- Atari advised the dealers of the severe consequences if they sold the chips to anyone who did not buy a 19" moniterm.

FYI: The above mentioned dealer, as of today, has announced that since the bulletin is out for all to see, he has adjusted his prices to reflect the \$99.00 price for the chipset. (Installation NOT included)

SUMMATION OF DEALER/DEVELOPER UNREST & OF THE TOS 1.4 FIASCO

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The Causes - The Effects - The Related Problems - The End Results

Dealer after dealer we contacted said the same basic thing, "Mike Dendo was making good things happen we don't believe the story that he quit so he could be near his family".

>>> STReport agrees, We feel there is much more to Mike Dendo's departure than we are being told. Perhaps, a lackluster executive within the upper reaches of Atari used Mike Dendo's career with Atari as a catalyst for his own career advancement. After all, take a good look folks, it is simply unbelievable that all the departures in the past 18 months were voluntary and passive. We submit that most, if not all were given the old familiar choice; Fired or Resign?

New joke among the computer industry executives:

"Want a nice California Vacation? ...Go work for Atari!"

Both users and dealers agree that the leadership factor put forth by Atari's top brass is confused and lacks direction. Additionally, most observers have vociferously complained about the negative aura hanging over Atari with all it's "Bright Young Executives never lasting more than 180 days!" One dealer even exclaimed he felt the "used car salesman ought

to go ...then Atari will be on the right track!" ..No, he wouldn't tell us who that is.

>>> STReport again agrees, considering that during the past three years, Atari's executive offices looked more like the turnstiles in the New York Subway, the time has come to stop the internal executive wars and posturing. The time is at hand to take care of Atari's business not to continue to try and cut each other's throats. You would think that after three years of fun and games these guys would realize that * WE ALL ARE WATCHING THEM! * Actually, it is sad, if the executive corp. at Atari put as much effort into getting the new products to market as they do in fighting each other there would be plenty of room at the top! The company would be a fantastic success.

Users, Developers and Dealers are genuinely concerned about the wisdom and future of the CD-ROM and STE.

>>> STReport, in talking with developers finds that many of them are simply "not interested" in the STE, we asked why.. This was one of many similar answers; " Why should we? We are here, but are NEVER asked for our opinion or even allowed to know what is planned! For example, we spend our fortunes and our time to develop goodies for the ST what do they do? Never tell US that THEY are going to a SQUARE SURFACE MOUNT 68000 CHIP in the STE!" Folks, that rules out the possibility, at this point in time, for any of the newer, fancy goodies to operate properly as they are all designed with the conventional 68000 chip configuration in mind. We submit that somebody at Atari dropped that ball again, why keep the developers uninformed? What purpose is served? Who, if not the dealers and developers are being punished here? Now, with the MEGA, STE, TT, and Portfolio, dealers must invest quite heavily to accomodate the potential market. Ultimately, the users are punished by all the added costs.

IN CLOSING;

The CD-ROM, now there's a sore subject well ridden into the sunset.... someone eventually will pay dearly for that fiasco, rumor has it the same person who handled a few other of Atari's "prize" accomplishments is 'in charge' of the CD-ROM thingy. A few of the developers even mentioned the AMIGA by name and said, "If Commodore adds their new operating system to the 300 and up, the STE will have a very rough time of it!".

Atari users are among the most loyal of users the industry has ever known, why then is the company so bent on trying their patience? Above all else, STReport is not down on Atari products they are among the very best ever made. We are genuinely concerned about certain decisions and observable occurances made by a few of it's executives. After having had the opportunity to interview a number of individuals who have "left" the Atari executive corp., all we can honestly say is... Sam please, look carefully at all the executives, do they really have Atari's best interests at heart? Better yet, ask a few of your Dad's old friends like Shiraz ..(the father of the ST).

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